

Hiccup, Bount

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Summary: The addition of Hiccup into the Bleach universe, as a Bount. Because every other major character type is represented in the Karakura gang.

Hiccup, Bount

Ichigo Kurosaki, Substitute Shinigami and student, sloped into class barely before the bell. He'd been out hunting Hollows again the previous night, at the insistence of the Shinigami who'd forced her way into his life barely a week before.

She was hyperactive as hell, unwilling to take no for an answer â€“ and \_right\_ as well, damn her. It was like having an annoying little sister, something Ichigo was more than used to already. It wouldn't be so bad somehow if she looked as old as she said she was, or perhaps acted it more consistently, orâ€¦

Breaking out of his chain of thought â€“ clearly a symptom of lack of sleep, that â€“ he finally noticed a new student in the class, standing next to the teacher (who gave him a stern look for almost being late, and looking so tired as well) and chalking his name on the blackboard. In romanji, too, which wasn't usual. At least it wasn't one of those horrible rabbit diagrams of Rukia'sâ€¦ though come to think of it, that pair of letter d's looked a lot like rabbit earsâ€¦

The new student finished writing, and stood aside to let everyone see. Ichigo noticed he had sort of reddish-brown hair. Wow, someone else with a strange hair colour.

"Hello, my name is Hiccup Haddock. I'm new to the country, so please don't be confused by my accent."

One of the girls had snickered at the name. On seeing that, Hiccup gave a broad grin. "Don't worry about making fun of my name, though.

Yes, it's a silly one, but I make fun of it too. I hope we can all be friends!"

He seemed to genuinely mean it, too, but Ichigo couldn't help but feel that there was something off about him.

That lanky kid with the glasses seemed tense, too, which was admittedly something that was common recently. The tall youth had seemed the same way around Ichigo especially, come to think of it!

Eh, whatever. Ichigo put it out of his mind, and began to concentrate more on staying awake. Rukia seemed to be completely refreshed, which was even more annoying than she normally was.

\* \* \*

><p>"â€¢|don't like you being here."<p>

The new kid laughed weakly. "Well, I suppose it's only normal to be upset at a new transfer student-"

"You know what I mean." Ishida moved in closer. It was break time, and Hiccup had been busily sketching in a notebook before Ishida confronted him. "This place is under my protection."

Hiccup twirled his automatic pencil. "If we're getting down to business then, then I can assure you that I will not be any threat to anyone that doesn't deserve it."

Ishida frowned minutely. "And how do you define someone who deserves it?"

The other boy shrugged. "Few things. Mainly I rely on the fact that in any city of this size, there's going to be a few people who're hellbound. And while the police need certain types of evidence, I can generally tell anyway." Hiccup finally made eye contact. "But I'm not a fan of the red ribbons any more than you are. So we'll try not to blow anyone's cover, okay?"

After a moment's thought, Ishida nodded.

"Excuse me." They turned to see Rukia, the other new student, standing there. "But I couldn't help overhearing the end of that conversation. What were you talking about?"

Hiccup chuckled. "Yeah, sorry, it could have sounded a bit strange. We were having a disagreement over the best way to add a little colour to something â€“ we're both interested in sewing, see â€“ and I prefer green because of my eyes, whereas Ishida's more of a fan of the colour blue. But neither of us particularly like red, and it's important we don't talk about our especial dislike of the red ribbon because it sounds like we're also not liking the recipients of the medal."

"Oh?" Rukia asked. "I've not heard of this medal."

Ishida mentally smirked. \_Got you, Shinigami! Everyone knows that.\_ "I'm surprised, actuallyâ€¢ it's the award our nation gives for risking one's life in the service of others."

She looked sour. "Sorry, then. I'm not very good with that sort of thing."

Hiccup rubbed the back of his head. "Well, Ishida here had to tell me about it, warn me that it meant something here in Japan. I'm new to the country, after all."

Keigo and Mizuiro wandered over. "You're new to the country? Your Japanese is very good."

Hiccup waved it off. "I knew I was coming for some time, so I made an effort to learn it."

He went back to drawing as the group made small talk, and carefully sketched out the rest of the wing he was working on. \_Hmmâ€| more swept back there for speedâ€| a second pair of smaller wings behind the first, finlike I think, for extra controlâ€| Yeah, this'll work.\_

\* \* \*

><p>That evening, Hiccup stood on his apartment balcony as the light faded. A small shape swooped down to him out of the dusk and alighted on his outstretched arm.<p>

"Well, anything?"

The form shook its' head.

"Very well, then. Thanks for your effort."

The flying creature chirped, dissolved into nothing, and a sheet of paper floated down from where it had been. Hiccup collected it.

"Hmmâ€| perhaps I should send out more than one tomorrow. This town is lousy with spiritual pressure."

\* \* \*

><p>Two nights later, Hiccup paced anxiously. He'd sent out three small constructs that morning, and only two had returned. It was getting on for proper nighttimeâ€|<p>

Then, he saw a pair of wings moving unsteadily through the gloom.

"What happened to you?" Hiccup said, aghast, as the final one of his little scouts flopped down onto the floor of the balcony.

"\_I feel warm and fuzzyâ€| "\_

Hiccup carefully scooped his construct up and brought him inside. "What went wrong?"

"\_I met the target's sister, Yu something. She found me so cute she nearly suffocated meâ€| "\_

Hiccup hissed. "You weren't discovered, were you?"

"\_I think she wasn't properly awake.\_"

\* \* \*

><p>"Well?" Ishida asked, keeping an eye on the rest of the Handicraft club.</p>

Hiccup drew a piece of thread from the bag between him and Ishida, slipping it into the eye of a needle. "I've been keeping an eye on them. Neither have done more than fight hollows, apart from that business with the caged soul earlier. In fact, it sounded like that guy's story was the same as ours."

The Quincy paused in adding a cross to one of a pair of gloves.  
"Oh?"

"Yeah. Apparently called a Modsoul, with physical enhancements to the body. All of them were supposed to have been destroyed, dangerous to Soul society, you know the drill. But Rocza overheard-"

"Rocza?"

"I take some of their names from books, it helps with the visualization. Anyway, he apparently slipped through the net, same as us. And they're not turning him in. Moreover, apparently they've done something wrong by Soul Society standards themselves. I'd say you could probably at least have a talk with them without being in too much danger.

Ishida shook his head. "I could never sink so low as to talk with a Shinigami. The-"

"Honour of the Quincy would not permit it, I know, I know. Why not talk to Ichigo, then?"

Ishida considered. "I think that sounds like a good idea."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup groaned to himself as Rocza reported what had just happened to him, through 'her' identical twin construct Loiosh.</p>

Ishida stepped into the alley. "Well?"

The shorter boy tapped his foot. "How was that talking? You just bumped into him and looked ominous."

"Any more would-"

"Would honour of the Quincy impossible yada yada yada."

Ishida glowered. "I'm starting to suspect that you don't respect my beliefs as much as you used to."

"Well, I'm starting to suspect you use your honour as a shield against having to do anything you don't want to. But that's just me."

"Fine, I'll talk to him later." Ishida pushed his glasses up his nose, where they shone with sourceless light. "But I can't promise it'll be nice."

\* \* \*

><p>That evening in the handicraft club, Hiccup had to stop himself from beating his head against the desk. "You actually used your bow in front of them? You don't believe in half measures, do you?" <p>

"Yes. Can we get on with the club now? They're nearby."

Hiccup rolled his eyes, and pulled out his current project. Unlike the rest of his output, which were mostly sketches, this one was a stuffed toy under construction. There was still the common theme, though â€“ it was another dragon.

Selecting a thin black thread, Hiccup started sewing the alar phalanges into the wings. It was delicate work, and he had to avoid making mistakes, which wasn't made any easier for him when Ishida started showing off for the eavesdroppers by repairing a toy in seconds.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oh, you have got to be kidding me, Ishidaâ€| a competition?" Hiccup felt for a moment like just giving up, but shook it off. "Well, I suppose that I can at least sort one thing out before things go too badly wrong." <p>

He walked into the Urahara shop, Loiosh riding his shoulder.

Urahara himself actually started in surprise upon seeing him. "Bount! Get out of here!"

Hiccup shook his head, raising his arms non-threateningly. "No, hear me out. I need to explain a few things first. One of them is that the Quincy, Ishida Uryuu, and Ichigo Kurosaki are having a hollow hunting competition of all things â€“ which luckily won't destroy the world because Quincy arrows, unlike what you stated, don't destroy souls. Basically nothing can destroy a soul. Quincy simply imperfectly absorb the power of the target until their natural death and subsequent purification." Urahara tried to interject, but Hiccup raised a hand. "Oh, by the way, isn't it a bit hypocritical to tell me to leave but not the modsoul? And for the record, my soul 'eating' works the same way as Quincy arrows."

The shop owner frowned. "How do you know this?"

In reply, the Bount simply caressed the back of his small shoulder dragon. "Eyes in the sky for some of it, and as for the rest â€“ I researched the nature of the soul. It's important to me. Besides, I'm not technically new to the country, just coming back after a long time gone."

Loiosh bent to whisper something into his ear. Hiccup's face went white.

"That idiot used Hollow Bait! Everyone, if you value their lives, get

to the streets and protect people!"

\* \* \*

><p>A young man on the streets of Karakura ran desperately from the strange thing behind him, panic flooding his veins. Whatever the thing was, it was invisible but clearly still there, shoving streetlights aside in its' eagerness to reach him.</p>

Then there was a woosh of motion overhead, a crash, and whatever was chasing him stopped.

Hiccup jogged past, paging through his sketchbook for anything that had the power to stand up to a Hollow. The Timberjack he'd already released was a good start, having cut that Hollow's mask cleanly in two with its' razor edged wings, but at barely three feet across there were limits to what a single drawn dragon could do.

\_This is why I was working on the stuffed version!\_ he thought frantically. \_There are less limitations with one of them as it's already-. Ah, this'll help.\_

"\_Zeige Dich, Furie!\_ Deadly Nadder!" he called, and a second dragon, blue with mottled bright colours to those that could see it, joined the first ahead of him. He turned to Rukia, who was jogging alongside. "Any others at street level?"

She didn't take her eyes off her phone, currently set to radar mode. "Next right, then second left."

The two dragons sped off, and Hiccup got back to looking. \_Where did I put the Nightmare?\_

The two were working to clear the areas of Karakura town that were below the line of the buildings, reasoning that any that made it past Ishida and weren't headed for Ichigo were the ones most likely to hurt people.

Rukia spoke up as the two turned right down the street, headed for the next Hollow. "I know that Bount are supposed to have dolls, and I assume yours is called 'Furie', but what \_is\_ it?"

"He's a draconic spirit, basically. And his power is related to the ability to make any depiction of a dragon - that I have personally worked on - into a real creature with a bit of his spirit. There are limitations to how much different to the image the dragon can be, though."

Rukia shook her head as the Timberjack and Nadder returned from their work, and she pointed to another street. "Down there, one got into an apartment. And what I meant is, does it "he " have a sealed form?"

Hiccup made an \_ah\_ of understanding, and nodded. "Yeah, my pencil. He's able to change a little when like that, so I can use him for all sorts of creative arts. Ah, here we go." Hiccup summoned the largest of his dragons yet, a full four feet in wingspan and covered in spikes. "Brawler tactics, fire at will." The Nightmare made an enthusiastic growl and sped off to engage another Hollow that had made it past the skyline, bursting into flame as it did so.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oh, that can't be good." Hiccup stared at a colossal <em>Garganta</em> forming above Karakura town, like a curtain being drawn back on the world. "Whatever comes through that, this is not going to be fun at all."

Discarding his sketchbook on the ground and calling his dragons back to defend him, Hiccup began repeatedly clicking the end of his doll. "Nib end, noâ€œ! pencil's no goodâ€œ! ah!" He checked the small piece of chalk protruding from the end of Furie. "Rukia, I need time. Can you go over and help Ichigo for now?"

She nodded curtly. "Sure. What are you doing?"

"I need to draw something big."

Hiccup crouched down on the pavement, and closed his eyes for a second. He'd been drawing dragons of all types for simply ages, but it wasn't until recently he'd been working with anything other than pencil and paper. It was stillâ€œ not hard, but not trivial either, to make the mental shift.

\_Got it.\_

He started with the wings, making them long, thin and manoeuvrable. Four of the alar phalanges were out in front of the main support section of the wing, providing a control surface. Durability wasn't an issue, this construct would have the innate properties of a chalk drawing instead of a pencil sketch. Pencil endured unless erased, but chalk crumbled and washed away in the rain.

Next, the body. Thin, supple, and whiplike for maximum agility. No tail fin â€œ it wouldn't be needed with a tail that long.

Glancing up briefly, Hiccup saw that a Hollow bigger than any he had ever seen before was coming through the Garganta. This wasn't going to be fun, and if he had any sense he'd leave it to the Shinigami and the Quincy.

\_Pity I grew up with Vikings. I guess they rubbed off on me after allâ€œ\_

Okay, focus. Arms, legs, headâ€œ and done!

\_Zige dich, Nacht Furie! Air Drake!\_

\* \* \*

><p>Ichigo stared up at the enormous Menos. "How the <em>hell</em> are we supposed to fight \_that?\_"

Ishida adjusted his glasses. "I have an idea, but it'll take too long to get set up."

The substitute turned to him. "If it's our only chance, then we have to take the risk!"

"There's no point being hasty and getting ourselves killed."

A sudden blast of air came from overhead as Hiccup shot past, the thin spike on the tail of his airdrake cutting an insignificant wound into the side of the Gillian. It roared, and began to turn ponderously as Hiccup banked around it. They could see a rope of some sort lashing him to its' torso.

Rukia ran up. "I was going to ask you to give Hiccup time to do whatever he's doing, but it looks like he's the one buying it for us now. So. Do either of you have any ideas?"

Ishida gave a slight smirk. "What, the Shinigami can't fight these?"

Rukia shook her head in irritation. "Normally we call in a lieutenant. Normally, I could do it, but this clown," she jerked her arm at Ichigo, "managed to take my entire spiritual power reserves and somehow hasn't managed to get his release yet."

Ichigo fumed, but Ishida pulled him aside. "Not now. We need to get something useful from that massive spiritual energy stock you have." The Quincy gave another slight grin. "Now, we need some tape!"

\* \* \*

><p>The drake spun in place, avoiding a minor hollow not absorbed into the Gillian, then decapitated it with a sweep of its' whiplike tail. Hiccup leant over his constructs' back and directed it right.</p>

The Gillian swept a claw through the space they had just occupied.

Hiccup exhaled as his drake pulled up and executed a wingover. That had been close. The only defence he had was to not be in the way of an attack.

He pointed left and down, sending the still active Timberjack to destroy one of the last remaining hollows, noticing as he did so that two of his classmates were following his movement from a nearby bridge.

\_Looks likeâ€| Inoue and Chad? I think soâ€| anyway, looks like they've joined the little band of Karakura spiritually aware.\_

Suddenly, the hair on the back of his head stood up. Reacting on instinct, he forced a sharp dive straight down.

The massive red Cero that blazed past him only nicked the right wingtip of his drake, but that was enough â€" as he looked over, he could see that the wing was starting to come unravelled. The chalk drawing just wasn't durable enough for this, and the energy forced into it from the blast had removed the "tied off" ends of the animation technique.

"Okay, time's upâ€|" he muttered, looking back at the Menos. "Let's hope I survive this."

Estimating he had about twenty seconds left, the Bount determined to

make it as far from the rest of the combatants as possible. If it had to waste more time going after him, the Gillian would leave his friend "friend\_s", he realized, as Rukia had been courteous enough he could count her among that number, and he looked forward to knowing the rest "alone to prepare whatever plan they had.

He glanced down, and swallowed. He was quite low by now, but going far too fast as part of the tradeoff.

Hiccup had the drake flare its' wings to bleed off as much speed as possible, and dispelled it as it finally rolled over from the imbalance. The twenty foot drop to the ground passed in a flash, and the impact "at about forty miles per hour ground speed - gave a screaming pain along his ribs that he knew meant he'd overused his natural durability.

Back in the direction he'd come, the air-tearing sound of another Cero signalled the Gillian having decided to ignore the strange dragon in favour of attacking the strongest spiritual pressure in Karakura town.

Through the pain, Hiccup watched in incredulity as a massive blue flare of power made a pretty good attempt at bisecting the Menos.

"Don't worry, Hiccup," A female voice said hurriedly, and a golden shield formed around him.

Chad stepped in front of him, so presumably the other was Orohime. The larger boy nodded to him. "Nice work."

\* \* \*

><p>Orohime squinted sceptically at his (perfectly normal, if slightly uneven) teeth. "Soâ€| you're some kind of vampire?"<p>

Hiccup sighed. "We came first, so it's more like vampires are a kind of Bount. Same as how a lot of historical monsters are really Hollows."

Ichigo nodded dubiously. Kisuke, meanwhile, just glared at Hiccup.

"Look, I said I'm no danger to you and I meant it. Since arriving in Japan I've taken one soul, total, and it was a multiple murderer. You know as well as I that someone like that would do more harm if he died normally, as he'd instantly become a Hollow." Hiccup then waved a hand. "I wouldn't even do that, as there's a lot of people like Ichigo here who put out enough energy to satisfy me pretty much fully from passive drain, but taking human souls ages Bounts and I've been fifteen since the sixties."

"Curiousâ€| so a Bount that didn't take human souls would never physically age?"

"I think so, or at least they'd do so at an extremely protracted rate. It could be different for me, though, or I could have missed something. Now, can I go? I have work for school to do."

Ichigo suddenly slammed a hand on the table. "Why do you go to school anyway, if you're really several hundred years old or whatever?"

"Seventy-three, thanks, and I do it because that way I get a lot of perspectives. I know how to do a lot of things from just taking clubs over that time, though I admit that taking maths twenty five times gets a bit boring after a while."

Rukia raised an eyebrow. "So you have sort of the opposite case to me. I last came to earth for any significant time in the Meiji period, whereas you've lived decades from an identical perspective."

Hiccup snorted. "Yeah. Short."

Orohime raised her hand. "Er, Hiccup? Why are you called that?"

The Bount shook his head. "I was raised by some old Swedes for the first ten or twenty years of my life. They hadâ€œ|" he sighed, "interesting ideas on how to protect children from monsters. The idea was that the name would terrify any marauding trolls that there might happen to be."

"Raised? Not by your parents, then, or however you came about." Kisuke was suddenly alert.

"I was born in something approaching the normal way, though since my parents were both Bount and having two in one place is risky â€“ let alone three â€“ they left me as a fosterling. I only met them a few times."

Jinta slouched into the shop. "What's the deal with you anyway, boss? So he's weird. So what?"

Hiccup smiled sadly. "Bount are considered to be monsters by Soul Society, if I recall correctly. Same as Quincy, same as Mod-souls, anything that's not a Shinigami or a baseline human is danger."

Kisuke looked shifty.

"But it's getting late. See you guys tomorrow at school â€“ there's a few days left in the term, right?"

"Term ends on the 20th. It's more for admin than anything."

"Right, got it. Loiosh, make sure my path's clear."

Hiccup left the gathering with his small dragon flitting around him.

\* \* \*

><p>After the rest had left, Rukia sat heavily on one of the futons. "I'm worried."</p>

Uruhara nodded. "You think what they've done will alert Soul Society that something is off here." It wasn't a question.

"Exactly. I need to leave, so they're not caught up in it. They're all so nice, and some of them would be executed on sight!"

The shop owner shook his head. "I can't help you, whether you leave or stay."

"I'm not sure! I'll probably decide tomorrow. It's so hard! I mean, maybe if I leave Ichigo will still be a target, or!"

"Sleep on it. That's what I always do." He suddenly got a mischievous look on his face. "Though I remember I also slept on it when the Second World War broke out, and next I knew it was 1946 and Japan had been defeated."

Rukia snickered, then sobered. "Thanks."

"No problem. Now get out, I need to close up the shop."

Across the street on a light pole, a small green form with overdeveloped ears blinked. \_Interesting!\_

Grace flew into the air and began to return to Hiccup's apartment. The Listening Dragon, made in the style of a clan of fullbringlers Hiccup had once visited in the UK, felt her master needed to know this.

Especially if it meant that powerful Shinigami would be in the area.

\* \* \*

><p>Ishida sat at a table in Hiccup's apartment, working on his latest project.</p>

Kon.

The little lion plush had been severely damaged in an unspecified sequence of events earlier that day, so Ishida needed to repair him. And as Hiccup had better supplies than Ishida due to his ongoing project, the Quincy had come round to use them.

It wasn't any kind of visit for reasons of friendliness. Not at all. That would be unbecoming of a Quincy.

Suddenly, the little Listening dragon on the desk Hiccup was sketching at started and cocked her head.

Then she began to tremble, producing a rattling sound.

Simultaneously Ishida jerked his head around.

Hiccup clapped his sketchbook shut. "Well?"

"You were right. Two, very powerful."

"Is Kon finished?"

Ishida tied off a thread. "Good enough."

"Right." Hiccup pointed to the plush. "Now, you - you better get over to Ichigo as soon as possible. He's going to need you."

\* \* \*

><p>Ishida paused, causing Hiccup to do the same. "Wait. Let me go in. If you must help, do it from a position of secrecy."</p>

"I'm not a coward, Ishida. I'll -"

"You'll stay back because Bount, unlike Quincy, are under sentence of death by Soul Society. We're human enough that they have to restrain themselves â€“ but you are \_not.\_"

"Fine." Hiccup sat down, and began unfolding a long bolt of black silk from his bag. This was his strangest and most laborious piece, essentially appearing to be just a silhouette, but the properties of the material were enhanced by the painstaking work of fusing every thread in the material so it terminated into the start of another â€“ making it a closed system.

Conceptually, nothing could escape from a closed system. Perfect for concealment.

"\_Zige Dich, Furie! Schatten!"\_

The silk flowed into life and vanished â€“ along with its' master.

Ishida blinked. "You know, that's really strange." He focussed briefly, and the familiar ribbons formed around him. "Yes, there's no trace of yours at all. Strange, though â€“ Rukia's has all but bleached white."

The air rippled, and Hiccup's head poked out. "Whatever it means, you better get moving. This isn't durable at all, so I'll hang back and send Menolly's Fair to support you. Keeping up \_Schatten\_ is really draining, and the Fair count as only a single animation since I drew them all as one picture." Hiccup vanished again, and after a moment nine colourful dragons appeared past the rippling air, none of them more than a foot long.

"What do they do?"

One of them spat a small flame, while another flickered from one place to another as demonstration. The lone green one landed on his shoulder for a moment, and whispered, "I'll use this one to speak to you, her twin's in here with me. Don't get yourself killed."

"Quincy's do not get themselves killed. They are unjustly killed by others after making enemies." Ishida said as he started towards the shinigami again.

"And the difference at the end of the day is?" the fire-lizard known as Auntie Two asked, before taking flight again.

\* \* \*

><p>Ishida walked slowly forward into the light. "Well, you see, I

was out—" inspiration struck, "taking my exotic pets for some exercise, and what did I find but some Shinigami harassing a fellow student at my school?"<p>

Rukia's eyes widened. \_Exotic pets? Does he mean "oh, clever. Nii-sama won't work out that dragons aren't real, recently discovered animals, as he's not been to the real world in almost thirty years except on emergency call.\_

"You know us to be Shinigami?" Byakuya asked. "Then you know the consequences of interfering. This is an internal Shinigami affair."

"I know your laws. The death of a human, Quincy or not," he formed his bow, "Is punishable most severely. That's why you merely didn't help my grandfather."

"Foolish." The Kuchiki head declared. "If you are to attack first, then that law becomes moot. And if you do not attack us, then your appearance here has no purpose."

At that point, three of the fire lizards orbited a little too close to Renji, who swatted at them with his sealed Zanpakuto.

Ishida fired on him. "You're attacking my pets. That's reason enough for me to fight you legally."

Rukia winced as the standoff quickly developed into Renji fending off the darting attacks of nine flash-stepping small dragons and the occasional sniper shot from the Quincy.

Through it all, Byakuya watched impassively.

Then things got worse, as Ichigo skidded into the area lit by the lamp posts and drew his own Zanpakuto. "What the hell's going on here?"

"Ichigo!" Rukia called out. "Run! Stay away, I'm going with them willingly."

"Like hell! If you were, you'd have let us know about it. We're your friends!"

"I didn't because if I told you you'd try to stop me. The punishment for the crime I committed isn't extreme, but it has to be served."

Ishida forced a smile. "So the Soul Reapers punish their own operatives for doing what they can to avoid death. Why am I not surprised."

Renji, annoyed beyond endurance, jumped back and ran his hand down his Zanpakuto. "Howl, Zabimaru!"

Thus released, his Zanpakuto caught one of the fire lizards and sliced into it, forcing it down for a moment before it disappeared.

He blinked. "What?"

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup grimaced at the faint stab of pain, and his open sketchbook regained a slim blue shape â€“ Uncle.</p>

Auntie One crooned gently, and he shared the sight of her twin for a second.

"Soâ€œ that's a Shikai, huh?" He sighed. "I wish I could help moreâ€œ but that other one's as strong as Dad, if not more."

Brownie, Rocky and Diver appeared shortly after, then with a series of whooshing noises every other fire lizard in the Fair except for the green Aunties.

"Great. That didn't go as well as expected." Hiccup sighed, and began following everything Auntie Two saw.

It wasn't encouraging. First Ishida had been beaten, then Ichigo â€“ who'd been holding his own fairly well against the tattooed Reaper â€“ had been cut down in a second by someone who was apparently Rukia's brother.

Waiting only the few seconds for the Senkaimon to close, Hiccup dropped his sustainment of Schatten and the remnants of Menolly's Fair, switching it for Loiosh and Rocza, and sent them to get help â€“ specifically, Urahara and Orohime â€“ while he himself headed for the site of the battle.

\* \* \*

><p>"Ishida! You okay?"</p>

The Quincy grimaced. "Bit of a sword wound to the shoulder, but it's mostly my pride. But your dragons took an awful beating. Are you alright after the violent loss of your constructs?"

"They're still okay, as some of the instance was left. The two greens. How's Ichigo?"

"Bad. Very bad. I think it was his soul sleep."

The Bount moved over and crouched next to his school friend. "You're right, but he's still alive. Looks like everything of Rukia's left him, but there's still Shinigami reiatsu in there." A moment with his backpack, and Hiccup produced another sketch. "Zige dich, Furie: Zaire." A bronze shape flowed off the paper. "Yep, I'm using Zaire's senses. It's weird as hell, almost like my powers actually. Blend of human and Shinigami, on a deep level."

Ishida looked interested as the two began hoisting Ichigo up to carry him. "Your powers?"

"Bount are supposed to have been some kind of experiment to create Mod-souls with release-based powers, like a Shinigami Zanpakuto. Your own powers, as a Quincy, are more mental trigger-based and resemble a Hollow rather than a Shinigami. Hollow powers are always 'on', for lack of a better word, and Shinigami are sealed until used."

"Right. Where's Urahara?"

"I gave him the location, Loiosh should be reaching him about now."

Three seconds later, the former 12th Division head appeared in a swirl of Shunpo. "Well?"

Ishida answered. "I am wounded on the body; the injury is minor. Ichigo has a spiritual injury to the Soul Sleep and possibly the Chain Link."

Urahara frowned. "How's his reikoryu?"

"Better than I'd expect, it seems that he has some of his own power to bolster his system from the effects of losing Rukia's." Hiccup said, before adding, "And it's off somehow. Blended human and Shinigami."

The shop owner looked shifty. "That's normal for him, but I don't want to say more. It's because of a promise."

Hiccup shrugged. "Fair enough. We all have our secrets."

\* \* \*

><p>Urahara stepped into the dining room of his shop, sliding the door closed behind him. "He's stable. And I plan on helping him unlock his <em>own</em> Shinigami powers."

"Right." Ishida thought for a moment. "Knowing Ichigo, he'll want to go and rescue Rukia. Knowing Chad and Orohime, they'll want to come. And knowing me—"

"You'll come along because we're your friends, maintaining a grudging façade while secretly going along to save Rukia rather than to get one over on the Shinigami. Am I right?" Hiccup grinned. "And as for me, well, Viking. One of the things that rubbed off on me is the lack of sense of self preservation. I'm coming too."

"Right." Urahara snapped out a fan. "But you'll all need to build yourselves up. Soul Society is full of very powerful combatants."

Hiccup looked distant for a moment. "I know what I'm going to do. Ishida?"

"Same."

"I'll be busy with Ichigoâ€| I think an old friend of mine could be encouraged to help the others."

"Right. Meet back here inâ€| five days?"

Urahara and Ishida nodded. "Should give me time to have some fun with the boy!" The shopkeeper added.

"Ichigo's so screwed it isn't even funny." Hiccup muttered, as he picked up his stuff and turned to leave.

"How so?" Ishida asked, coming alongside to pick up his own things at

Hiccup's flat.

"That guy's got strong reiatsu levels. Same kind of level as Rukia's brother, who was a Shinigami captain. And he wants to train Ichigo in a "fun" way. What does that say to you?"

Ishida nodded. "I concur with your deduction."

"In other words you agree."

"Quincy do not concern themselves with plebeian short words."

Hiccup grinned. "Okay, now I know you're putting it on."

\* \* \*

><p>"Good morning, mister Urahara."</p>

"Ah, Hiccup. Good morning to you too. What are you visiting my humble shop for?"

The Bount shrugged. "I was wondering if you had a large concealed space to practice in. My powers are a bit inconsistent in how visible they are to normal humans, and this is sort of experimentation."

"Of course. In fact, I have an underground training area concealed beneath the shop."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup looked at the fake landscape. "It's niceâ€¦ but is this all it does?"</p>

Urahara deflated. "What do you mean?"

"I'm used to training in Scandinavia. Howling gales, freezing rainâ€¦ sure, it's nice that in Japan there's weather apart from snow and hail, but I want to stress-test myself. Not to mention that having the same landscape all the time encourages use of the terrain in specific ways. Makes you lazy."

At that point, something in the middle distance exploded with Hollow reiatsu. Urahara checked a small watch on his wrist. "Ooh, he's just about ripe!"

Hiccup nodded to himself. "You are a complete sadist, and I am glad I didn't have to train with you."

"Thanks for the compliment."

Hiccup rolled his eyes as the shopkeeper walked off. "Always with the crazy teachersâ€¦"

He slipped his backpack off his shoulder. "Here we go. I hope this works."

The plush dragon he pulled from the bag was a labour of a great deal of time. He'd been planning it before he even arrived in Japan, spent most of his free time at school working on the body and wings, and finally put the last three and a half days into completing it.

Even by the standards he held himself to " as an artist with more experience than most people could ever accrue " he thought this one was special. Black as space; a wide, toothless mouth with the hint of recessed teeth; four trunk legs; a lithe body; an enormous pair of primary wings and a secondary pair of flaps, with a finned tail to hopefully allow the kind of manoeuvrability even most of his smaller constructs could only imagine. And, as a major departure from his normal style, a to-scale leather saddle in the Viking horse style made as a separate entity.

He looked his work over one more time, looking for even the tiniest of flaws, then took a deep breath and reached for that inner spark of his power.

\* \* \*

><p>Bount generally had extremely close relationships with their dolls " in comparison to the usually-quiescent nature of a Zanpakuto or the manifest desire of a Fullbring, a doll was permanently aware. Usually.</p>

Neither Hiccup nor his parents had any ideas why, but his own doll was completely mute and had been since his birth. They had eventually written it off as being a consequence of his natural (instead of artificial) birth.

Something was different this time, though.

\_You did it! I was wondering when you'd get around to it.\_

Hiccup frowned. \_Who said that?\_

\_I did. You've finally managed to realize my best form. I'm like the doll of that other Bount who uses snakes " a main form and lots of secondaries.\_

\_Areâ€| are you my Furie?\_

\_Close.\_ The presence seemed amused. \_But not quite accurate. Listen closely, this is my proper name.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Tessai was distracted from his contemplation of the newly restored Ichigo by a second flare of Reiatsu.</p>

He glanced to his employer. "Sir, is that-"

"It's fine." Urahara looked pensive for a moment. "It feels like a Shikai awakening, actually. Strange."

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>Zige dich, Nacht Furie!"</em>

The little plush, of which Hiccup had been so proud, quivered and shifted and \_grew\_ to become a twenty five foot long dragon, crouched to the ground with a sense of readiness.

Then it jumped on Hiccup and began licking him. \_You heard me! I hoped you would!\_

"Erfâ€| hey, calm down, will you!"

\_No, I don't want to. I didn't know if you ever would manage to awaken me properly. I mean, all the other Dolls were already active, soâ€|\_

Hiccup frowned. "Actually, where did you come from?"

\_You've not seen it yet? I'm a dragon. I'm related to-\_

"-Wind and Fire. Gotcha." Hiccup pushed himself back up. "Don't suppose that the way the saddle stayed on is, perhaps, what it seems to mean?" He finished with a nervous grin.

\_Of course it is. You have my wings.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Ishida examined his hands. Unlike his last battle, they were clad in the Sanrei gloves that had acted like weights on a martial artist. They made it harder to focus his power, but the trade off was greatly increased ability.<p>

Only problem was that he couldn't take them off, or his powers would burn out like a firework.

\_Bit of a sword of Damocles, these. Though the improvement in my control is substantial and impressive.\_ He frowned for a moment.

\_Grandfather and father didn't â€" or don't â€" wear Sanrei gloves, though. What did â€" do â€" they do?\_

\_I'll see if Hiccup has any ideas. Or the shopkeeper, for that matter.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup listened for a second, then took out a little notebook and the multifunction tool that had been his doll.<p>

He glanced at the huge form of \_Nacht Furie.\_ "Will this still-?"

\_Yes. I am I. This body is but a manifestation of your true Doll â€" albeit the most powerful. In fact, I probably need a name.\_

"Later, Ishida has technical questions." Hiccup snapped in the pencil lead and began sketching out some arcane symbols. "Quincy power is a modified and hereditary form of Fullbring, I know that much. Human and Hollow, just as I'm Shinigami and artificial soul." \_And hence will age at half the rate of even a Shinigami. But nothing is eternal except for the Modsouls.\_ "You say this retards your ability to gather reishi, but that the end result is more power and controlâ€| hm. Human souls are the most malleable, it's why taking them causes a Bount to ageâ€| got it."

Ishida looked over the paper, which was covered with a maze of diagrams. "So soon?"

"I think so. I'll check with the shopkeeper. Excuse me, mister Urahara?"

Kisuke walked over, his hat restored or replaced from the one that had been hit by Ichigo's earlier attack. "Ah, my unusual clients. What can I do for you?"

Hiccup smiled briefly — the man was now his normal clownish self, which said that he trusted the boys more than he had weeks ago. That attitude was one for either a fight with an enemy consumed by arrogance or for making friendly conversation more enjoyable. "I was wondering if this makes sense. Ishida here has gloves that make it harder to!"

\* \* \*

><p>"Daring." Urahara commented, his first words in a few minutes. "But if you think it'll work, then I can't see a flaw in your analysis. You know, one plus one is three! I'd have spotted that."</p>

Hiccup shrugged. "I'm relying a lot on the properties of human souls here, and I was wondering if what you were doing to Ichigo was related."

"Yes, it's mainly the human soul that reacts like that to duress. You're really rather familiar with this, though."

"Comes from being a product of two types of soul, in a world populated by a third, and a need to dodge or kill a fourth." Hiccup shrugged. "And I tend to have a lot of free time in the evenings to research. You know that in Russia there are only seventeen possible Bankai? They proved that the Russian spiritual landscape was like that. Each one has a squad formed around the wielder as they achieve it. But anyway, do we have the time?"

Urahara clapped his hands. "Tessai! The calendar!"

The large man silently handed one over. Urahara flicked through it. "Hmmm! let's see! three days negative time in the Dangai! average length of time before condemnation! we have the time to get it started. But you'll have to stay here all the time, mister Quincy."

Ishida nodded coolly. "My father spends most of his time at his job, though he's so good as a Quincy that he must spend time practicing somehow. At any rate, I stayed out for three days straight working with the glove, he's not really bothered with where I am."

"Right." Urahara abruptly blasted out his full Spiritual Pressure, causing Hiccup to curse in Swedish and dive for cover with his Doll. "Scream, Benehime!"

Ishida dodged the crimson wave and fired back a few arrows, noticing as he did that the reishi for the shots came in unnervingly fast — and that despite the Sanrei glove.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup sat back and looked at the large black manifestation of his power, occasionally wincing in sympathy as explosions went past. Tessai had joined in a few minutes ago, firing off ludicrously highly ranked Kido spells without bothering to aim. Clearly this training method was one the team counted as 'fun'.</p>

By now, the air was saturated with Reishi and Ishida would be having more trouble not gathering it â€“ which, coupled with the threat of death from the battle, would hopefully force his human soul to evolve the ability to cope with spiritual engorgement.

But that wasn't what Hiccup was thinking about now.

"Blackie?"

\_Not with Kurosaki in your group. The potential for confusion is enormous.\_

"Salamandre?"

\_Be serious.\_

"Mnementh? Or Ruth?"

\_Tempting, but I'm not bronze or white.\_

"You actually got that reference?"

\_Like a Zanpakuto, I live â€“ lived â€“ in your inner world. I'm a part of you.\_

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "I'm running out of ideas. I may as well call you Toothless or something."

\_Actuallyâ€¦\_

Hiccup sighed. "You are kidding."

\_It's almost there. Make it moreâ€¦ Nordic.\_

"Fine. Tannluth then, that at least fits the conventions for Pernese dragons."

\_I can live with it. Nowâ€¦ care to fly?\_ The newly named Tannluth bent down invitingly.

Hiccup glanced over at the maelstrom near the centre of the training ground. "Yeah, sure, why not. Just make sure to do it low to the ground first."

\* \* \*

><p>Ishida flinched as a line of tearing lightning flashed past bare inches from his spine, and just managed to dodge a sword swipe from Urahara. Retaliating with a shower of arrows, he noted with little surprise that the arrows' dispersal simply went back into raising the spiritual saturation of the area.</p>

His entire body except for that covered by the gloves already ached with the sensation of having fought for hours of his normal regime,

and the faint tingling creeping up his wrists as spiritual pressure infiltrated his hands past the Sanrei gloves indicated that they'd not be so spared for long.

That saidâ€¦ he was enjoying this. A lot.

Hollows were rarely a challenge, or they were so powerful and dangerous that if he failed it would be the end of Karakura. Sparring with Grandfather, on the other hand, had felt like this â€“ there was something comforting about knowing that the other person was a friend, and you could give it your all without endangering them, even if that meant they were on a whole different level of power to you.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hiccup, Ishida, remember. Soul Society and everything there is a spiritual plane of existence. This is a particularly important caution to you two because what appears solid there is simply made up of spiritual particles, which your powers â€“ Quincy and Bount â€“ will be able to attract."</p>

Hiccup nodded. "Means I won't go hungry, at least." Tannluth crooned gently in his jacket, having reduced to the size of the plush that was his "sealed" form without losing his mobility.

Ishida, for his part, simply panted on the ground. He'd been on the go for the last eighteen hours straight and his entire body felt like it had back when Ichigo's power had briefly flared against the Gillian â€“ but magnified a hundred times.

"Oh, Ishida? When in Soul Society, if you can find at least one captain-level ally to help you practice, my estimate is that another twelve hours should build up enough of a tolerance for you."

"And where will I find one of those?"

The shopkeeper's fan snapped out again. "Well, don't tell the little kitty I said this, but Yoruichi is more powerful than you might think." He walked off. "I'll organize things for you."

\* \* \*

><p>Ichigo looked to his left. Chad, Orohime and the black cat guy, Yoruichi, had turned up that morning and announced in no uncertain terms they were coming with him.</p>

He wasn't as sure about Orohime coming as the others, but if she had spiritual powers then he supposed she could take care of herself.

Then he looked right. There were the people he knew less well. The longbowman Quincy, who apparently he really should know but really didn't much, and Hiccup. Hiccup was carrying a stuffed toy, which was new, but otherwise he was just like he'd always been outside school.

Nice crosses on the tunic, though.

Checking that Zangetsu's bandages were still around the sword, he

nodded. "Right, guys. Everyone ready?"

Everyone nodded or said an affirmative. Orohime's "Yes!" was the most enthusiastic by far. Hiccup, by contrast, almost seemed like he was dragging himself into it.

Ichigo gave himself a mental shake. Weird kid. Or septuagenarian or whatever he is.

The portal opened, and the six jumped through, headed for Soul Society.

\* \* \*

><p>AN:</p>

I know this is a cracktastic idea, but I'm trying to handle it fairly seriously. Unlike most of my other stories. This chapter's all there is so far and unlikely to be expanded much for a while.

This developed out of one of the silly shorts in my HTTYD Loops, one which really caught my imagination. It seemed to just make sense, somehow.

\* \* \*

><p>Dragons:</p>

Menolly's Fair, Zaire and other Fire Lizards that might show up are from the Dragonriders of Pern series by Anne McCaffrey.

Grace is from the Last Dragons series by Chris D'Lacy.

Loiosh and Rocza are Jhereg from the Vlad Taltos books. They're venomous rather than fire breathing.

HTTYD dragons are probably fairly obvious.

The air drake is a D&D monster, one of those much less powerful than "true" dragons, and Hiccup's \_schatten\_ construct is based off the Shadow Dragon from the same setting.

\* \* \*

><p>The nature of the soul:</p>

Humans are like mayflies, short-lived and with very little power. However, they are the most mutable and changeable. Humans can develop in years the kind of power that other types of soul would take decades or centuries to muster. This does, however, require both the desperate \_need\_ for power and the danger of death without it.

Hollows are powerful but relatively static, only growing by taking in the power of others â€“ Plus, human, shinigami, Hollow, it doesn't matter. Their power tends to alter the body as its' nature, making them the most monstrous.

Shinigami are long-lived, though not immortal. Slow-changing, but not static. They have the potential for great power, but rarely realize

it. Shinigami are a subset of the dead souls in soul society, so those seen as 'shinigami' are exceptional. Their power tends to have the property of being sealed, something that must be called upon to activate it. In this way, their power has tiers.

ModSouls are artificial, and hence very different from the rest. They are completely and totally static. The powers a ModSoul has at creation or "birth" are the powers it will have thirty thousand years later. A ModSoul is immortal, but since it is not a "true" soul it has no afterlife and if killed is gone forever. Their power tends to reinforce the body and empower it without external changes, though the effects can be exotic with specially designed modSouls.

Fullbring is the result of a mutable human soul taking on some of the properties of a Hollow, and involves the manifestation of desire or affection - they are often seen being based off games. Examples include Xcution and Chad's arms. Orohime's hairpins and the bows of the Quincy do not\_ quite\_ fit this mould, however, and may be cut with a third form of soul - that of Shinigami. Possibly from Ichigo. Nevertheless, I will assume them all to be Fullbring.

Arrancar and Vizard both are formed from the mix of Shinigami and Hollow soul properties in different amounts. Both have their powers and both sets of them on command release like a Shinigami, and both have altered bodies when using their full potential, though the Vizard rarely do and only take on the enhancement properties of their Hollow side.

Bount are artificial fusions of Shinigami and ModSoul, and are powerful but tragic. As half their soul is artificial, they age at a slower rate than even Shinigami, but the trade-off for this is that they will only live one life and then dissolve into the cosmos, dying an inevitable and final death. Since their souls are only half shinigami, their power tends to grow at a slow rate, and hence they often consume human souls (which causes them to grow and age faster, such is the nature of the human soul) or the souls of Pluses, which are nourishing but no more.

Togabito have had most of their Hollow nature removed by the effect of being sent to Hell, but the side effect is that they have just enough human soul to grow and change. It has been many millennia since souls were first sent to Hell, however, and the safeguards within seem thus far to have prevented a major breach.

Souls are nearly impossible to destroy. Souls consumed by a Hollow or Bount are released when their consumer is purified or dies, the weapon of a Quincy acts similarly and absorbs the power of the Hollow's core soul only into the user until the death of the Quincy. All the other souls that made the Hollow up are reduced to the bare minimum of power necessary to survive and sent on to the afterlife - this is so small an amount it is nearly undetectable, hence the idea that the Quincy "destroy" souls.

(I've never felt it made much sense that the only things that can destroy souls are, essentially, Quincy arrows. They're a massive amount less powerful than (say) Old Man Genocide's most basic attacks - the only thing he has that \_may\_ destroy a soul is Ennetsu Jigoku. That, and the world didn't end when Ishida started mowing down

Hollows in their hundreds with the Silver Sparrow or killing  
Arrancar.)

End  
file.